



Meeting Highlights | April 23, 2015 | Basin Advisory Panel

UPCOMING MEETINGS FOR 2015

BAP – Thursdays – 2:00-5:00PM – Sonoma Community Center

July 16 or 23? October 15

TAC – Wednesdays – 9:00-11:30AM – Valley of the Moon Water District

May 13 June 10 July 8 September 9 October 14

November 18* August & December – no meetings

* Second Wednesday in November is a holiday

MEETING PARTICIPANTS

- Fred Allenbach,
- Wendy Atkins, City of Sonoma
- Richard Dale, Sonoma Ecology Center
- Norman Gilroy, Community Alliance of Family Farms
- Jennifer Gray, Supervisor Susan Gorin's Office
- Vicki Hill, BAP Member and Well Owner
- Vicki Mulas, BAP Member and Well Owner
- Dan Muelrath, Valley of the Moon Water District
- Ed Nelson, Well Owner
- Karla Noyes, Sonoma Resident
- Kathy Pons, Valley of the Moon Alliance and Well Owner
- Maggie Salenger Haywood, Well Owner
- Marc A. Sylvester, Sonoma Resident

STAFF IN ATTENDANCE

- Andy Rich, Sonoma County Water Agency
- Marcus Trotta, Sonoma County Water Agency
- Tim Parker, Technical Consultant to the SVGMP
- Pete Parkinson, Consultant to the Water Agency

UPDATES

- Member News
 - Sonoma County Permit and Resource Management Department (PRMD) has developed revised draft water well construction standards based on mail and email comments received and an outreach meeting in April. the revised draft standards will be provided to the Board of Supervisors May 5th meeting.
 - Valley of the Moon Water District is holding a public hearing on May 5th at 6:45 PM to discuss and receive public comments on the future formation of a Groundwater Sustainability Agency in the Sonoma Valley (meeting handout). The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act that became effective at the beginning of 2015 requires that all high and medium priority basins (which

- includes the Sonoma Valley) form Groundwater Sustainability Agencies by June 30, 2017
- The Panel suggested writing a letter to VOMWD supporting a broad based and collaborative approach to forming a GSA in the Sonoma Valley
 - The Water Agency met with the Science Program instructors at the local public schools to discuss integrating water and groundwater into the teaching program. The ideas were well received and the Science program instructors will take the ideas and consider how to integrate groundwater in at different grade levels. Ed Nelson volunteered to help out.
 - Water Efficiency Program - Rebates on high-efficiency toilets and clothes washers and a High-Efficiency Fixture Direct Install Program for high-efficiency toilets and more. Limited Time Only - While funding lasts through May.
 - Drought Status and Briefing
 - Latest State snow survey indicated 1-inch of water left in Sierra snowpack – this is the historic low on record
 - Lake Sonoma level still looks okay at a little over 80 % target storage level. Lake Mendocino is over 60 % target storage level. The county is in very much different shape and a lot of the state.
 - Statewide Conservation Directive – Executive Order B-29-15
 - First Ever Statewide Mandatory Water Reductions - The Governor set forth an executive order for the State Water Resources Control Board to impose restrictions to achieve a statewide 25% reduction in potable urban water usage through February 28, 2016, which requires urban water suppliers to reduce compared to 2013.
 - The Order also directs DWR to facilitate funding for 50 million square feet of lawn and turf replacement with drought tolerant landscaping.
 - Valley of the Moon Water District is responding to the executive order
 - Extension of Stage 2 Mandatory Conservation through February 28, 2016
 - Limit the number of irrigation days per week to 3 days or less
 - Encourage rural residential, agriculture, golf courses, State and County parks and all other groundwater users in the Sonoma Valley to conserve water
 - No irrigation within 48 hours after a rainfall event
 - Big hotels have been going green for some time with turn and lawn replacement and conservation tools in place and publicizing their progress for the community to see
 - Legislative and Policy Update – meeting handout - will be sent electronically for easy access to links – high points
 - \$1B Emergency Drought Package – expedites Prop 84 and Prop 1 funding
 - Water recycling funding programs – over \$600M available and expedited – part of Emergency Drought program to make funding available more quickly
 - DWR will hold listening sessions on Basin Boundary changes – April 28 Willows – April 29 Visalia – April 30 San Bernardino – and May 1 on the web <http://water.ca.gov/groundwaer/sgm/listening.cfm>
 - Over 25 bills groundwater-related this session – see meeting handout

- DWR released California's Groundwater Update 2013 statewide volume
<http://www.waterplan.water.ca.gov/topics/groundwater/index.cfm>
- TAC Report
 - The TAC is developing and refining a range of alternatives to help address the depletion areas, including increased conservation, groundwater banking, stormwater recharge, and increasing recycled water use.
 - The alternatives will be combined into a number of various scenarios for modeling, including several possible climate change futures
 - The TAC has also continued to provide input and get updates on the groundwater flow model update

GROUNDWATER CONDITIONS SUMMARY (HANDOUT AND PRESENTATION)

- Precipitation chart shows 11 out of the last 15 years have been below average rainfall and many of those years have been significantly below average
- Hydrographs of shallow wells show generally stable groundwater level conditions with the exception of the El Verano area which shows some declines, and the southern end of the valley is more stable
- Hydrographs of deeper wells show declining trends, with some trends cyclic with climatic trends and other show long-term and steady declines
- USGS is going to do some additional data collection in the southern valley including total dissolved solids and stable isotopes and age dating to enable flowpath analysis which will help with determining the flux of water through the basin and improve the model

PROPOSED COMMUNITY-BASED OUTREACH SUBCOMMITTEE (MEETING HANDOUT)

A new subcommittee is proposed to:

- Raise awareness about declining groundwater levels among owners/residents in affected areas, including how individual actions and practices can help or impede groundwater sustainability
- Engage TAC and BAP members in practical, results-oriented initiatives to improve groundwater conditions
- Engage owners/residents to stimulate discussion about groundwater conditions and use in their area, leading to development and implementation of community-driven strategies that will help reverse trend in groundwater elevation decline
- Educate stakeholders about new requirements under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act
- Raise the visibility of the BAP and the adopted Groundwater Management Plan in a way that reinforces the community-based nature of this effort and builds support for future
- About 5 or 6 people to commit to work on this, work with the Water Agency as support, and with a low cost approach
- Good thing for the community to do – people sitting over the depleted areas and can make a difference with their actions on their own land
- Need a mix of residential, business, agricultural, public land constituents

- Then can look at how different types of landowners work together on solving this problem
- Example – Master Gardener programs that come out and help to design drought tolerant front yard
- Need to identify groups and programs and organizations that can help support this effort
- SEC is interested in participating (Richard or Caitlin) along with Norman, Karla, and Ed
- Can't manage what you don't measure
- Also ask the RCD and Daily Acts for participation

SUSTAINABLE GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT ACT (MEETING HANDOUT AND PRESENTATION)

The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA – pronounced “SiGMA”) was signed into law in September 2014 and became effective January 1, 2015 lays out the following requirements that changes the way groundwater is managed in California:

- Recognizes the preference for local management by local agencies, provides additional authorities for local agencies, and provides the state as a backstop to regulate unmanaged or poorly managed basins
- All DWR High and Medium priority Basins/Subbasins fall under SGMA requirements
 - SGMA requires that DWR prioritizes DWR Bulletin 118 basins and subbasins as high, medium, low and very low priority
 - Requires DWR to re-prioritize basins/subbasins and to consider adverse impacts on local habitat and local streamflows as another prioritization characteristic – DWR will be conducting a re-prioritization as part of an interim update to Bulletin 118 late 2016/early 2017
 - Sonoma Valley groundwater subbasin is a medium priority basin, and the Kenwood Valley Basin is very low priority
- New *Groundwater Sustainability Agencies* (GSA) must self-form by June 30, 2017
 - The intent of the law is for local agencies to jointly form a GSA and cover the entire basins/subbasin, however the law allows for multiple GSAs to cover a basin/subbasin, and the default for uncovered areas of a basins/subbasin is the county with the back stop the State water Resources Control Board
 - Eligibility to form a GSA include local agencies having responsibility for water management, water supply and land use decisions – for the Sonoma Valley this includes Valley of the Moon Water District, City of Sonoma, Sonoma County Water Agency and Sonoma County
 - GSAs must consider all interests of all beneficial uses and users of groundwater including agriculture, domestic, public& private water systems, tribes, environmental, and disadvantaged communities
- Sustainable Groundwater Management
 - “Management and use of groundwater in a manner that can be maintained during the planning and implementation horizon without causing *undesirable results*.”
 - SGMA defines *undesirable results* as one or more of the following occurring in a *significant and unreasonable* manner:

- Chronic lowering of groundwater levels indicating depletion of supply
 - Reductions in groundwater storage
 - Seawater intrusion
 - Degraded water quality
 - Land subsidence
 - Surface water depletions that adversely impact beneficial uses
- Water Rights
 - SGMA states that the intent of the Legislature is to “respect overlying and other proprietary rights to groundwater
 - Intent of the Legislature to “preserve the security of water rights in the state to the greatest extent possible consistent with the sustainable management of groundwater”
 - Nothing in this part or in any groundwater management plan adopted pursuant to this part, determines or alters surface water rights or groundwater rights under common law or any provision of law that determines or grants surface water rights
- GSA new authorities include
 - May adopt rules, regulations, ordinances and resolutions to implement SGMA
 - Conduct investigations
 - Require registration of wells
 - Require installation of water measuring devices at the well owners expense (excludes de-minimis wells of 2 acre-feet per year)
 - May impose well spacing requirements and control extractions
 - May assess fees to develop and implement local groundwater management plans
 - May make request to DWR to revise basin/subbasin boundaries
- GSAs must develop *Groundwater Sustainability Plans* by January 31, 2022 (non-critical basin/subbasins) and by 2020 for basins subject to critical conditions of overdraft as defined by DWR in Bulletin 118, including the following:
 - Physical setting and characteristics of the aquifer system
 - Historical data, groundwater levels, ground water quality, subsidence, groundwater-surface-water interaction, a discussion of historical/projected water demands and supplies
 - Map of area of the basin and boundaries
 - Map identifying existing and potential recharge areas
 - Sustainability goal
 - Measurable objectives, as well as interim milestones in increments of five years, to achieve the sustainability goal in the basin within 20 years
 - Planning and implementing horizon of 50 years
 - Monitoring and management of groundwater levels, water quality, groundwater quality degradation, and inelastic land surface subsidence and monitoring protocols
 - Consideration of other applicable local government plans and how the GSP may affect those plans
 - DWR may grant two five-year extensions upon a showing of good cause beyond the 20-year sustainability timeframe and may grant extensions beyond the two five-year extensions, if the local agency demonstrates a need for an extension, has made progress toward meeting its sustainability goal

- GSP development is exempt from CEQA but GSP projects are not exempt
- Land Use Planning Connection
 - GSAs must notify cities, county of hearings to adopt Groundwater Sustainability Plan, take into account local general plan assumptions, and be consistent with general plans if adopting any regulations on groundwater extraction that affects sustainability
 - Land Use Agencies are directed to notify GSAs of any proposal to substantially amend a general plan, review & consider any adopted Groundwater Sustainability Plan when amending the general plan
 - GSAs cannot supersede land use authority of cities & counties, nor can they issue permits for well construction, modification or abandonment of groundwater wells except as approved by a county authorized to issue those permits
- DWR Role
 - Develop rules and regulations for basin boundary revisions
 - Regulations for evaluating GSPs and coordination agreements by June 2016
 - Provide technical and financial assistance
 - DWR Evaluation and Assessment of GSPs
 - Periodically review GSPs (every five years) to evaluate whether they conform with SGMA and are likely to achieve the sustainability goal
 - If multiple plans are created for a basin, evaluate whether the plans conform with SGMA and together are likely to achieve sustainability goal
 - Evaluate whether a GSP adversely affects the ability of an adjacent basin to implement its GSP or impedes achievement of the sustainability goals in an adjacent basin
- Probationary Status and the State Water Resources Control Board as a Backstop
 - May intervene if GSA not formed or fails to adopt and implement compliant plan
 - Designate “probationary status” if deficiencies not addressed
 - Create interim plan for basin until local GSA can assume responsibility
 - Probationary status requires a GSA to respond to SWRCB and describe how it intends to rectify deficiencies
 - Can develop plan, curtail pumping and set surface water rights
- Fall 2014 – Formation of Sonoma County and Water Agency Work Group
 - Ongoing stakeholder outreach to provide information & seek input
 - Participate in statewide SGMA activities
 - Draft general principles for developing GSA governance options
 - Evaluate implications of SGMA to Sonoma County
 - Recommend initial steps to develop GSA governance options
- General Principles for Developing GSA Governance Options
 - Local agencies work together to identify a unified and equitable approach to governance
 - Management decisions are made at the local level
 - Find opportunities for sharing resources and expertise across basins
 - Build upon existing successful water management efforts

- Involve community stakeholders
- Provide a robust and transparent outreach program
- Possible GSA Options in Sonoma County Basins
 - Basin specific GSAs – most direct and simplest form and is the legislative intent
 - Centralized – one county-wide GSA
 - Hybrid – use county-wide resources with basin-specific management decisions
- Initial Steps for Developing GSA Governance
 - March 17 Board of Supervisors/Directors Briefing
 - Retained facilitator for stakeholder assessment
 - Based on assessment, facilitator will recommend process for development of GSA governance options and stakeholder outreach
 - Workgroup returns to BOS/BOD for consideration of governance process
 - Initiate governance development process upon approval by eligible local agency governing bodies
 - Continue outreach and education
- Next Steps for GSA Formation
 - Continue implementation of existing groundwater management plans - existing Groundwater Management Plans remain in effect until new GSPs are developed:
 - Santa Rosa Plain - focus on community outreach & monitoring
 - Sonoma Valley – address groundwater declines
 - Increase community awareness of impacts of SGMA
 - Monitor follow-up legislation
- BAP supports the maintaining the BAP and TAC and having a multi-agency GSA

ALTERNATIVES FOR SCENARIOS (MEETING HANDOUT)

- A Preliminary matrix of alternatives was provided as a handout which included
 - Stormwater Capture and Recharge
 - Stormwater Capture and Storage
 - Groundwater Banking
 - Increased Conservation to Reduce Demand
 - Increased Recycled Water to Reduce Demand
 - In Lieu Surface water Distribution from Groundwater
 - Pumping Redistribution
 - Salinity Intrusion Mitigation
 - Desalination
- Screening Criteria include
 - Relative Cost
 - Readiness to Proceed
 - Feasibility/Implementability
 - Leveraging Opportunity
 - Community & Political Support
 - Multi-Objective/Supports Watershed Health
 - Effectiveness Addressing Groundwater Depletion Areas

- Address Impacts/Unintended Consequences
- TAC will continue to work on the alternatives and screening to prepare for combining the selected alternatives into scenarios for modeling runs in the fall

EMERGENCY DROUGHT, PROPOSITION 1 & 84 FUNDING

- Proposition 1 includes a total of \$7.5B for a variety of water and groundwater projects
- \$100M for implementing SGMA
- \$800M for groundwater quality cleanup
- \$2.7B for water storage (surface water and groundwater reservoirs)
- Emergency Drought funds come out of Proposition and accelerate some of the funding, mostly for flood management
- Proposition 84 are on the last round of implementation funds
- The Sonoma Valley Groundwater Management Program needs to start preparing to pursue Proposition 1 and other funds

GROUDN WATER MODEL PROGRESS (MEETING HANDOUT)

Work has continued progressing on the groundwater model update

- Refinement of model group size relay ring of model to better represent hydrogeology Incorporation of rainfall runoff model of the entire watershed to better represent recharge
- Improved representation of surface water groundwater interaction Sonoma Creek and its tributaries dynamic estimation of crop water demands that includes precipitation, crop type, and land-use changes farm efficiencies, and climate improved estimates and representation of groundwater demands
- Refined model stress. Spent time steps to better reflect seasonal changes
- Incorporation of unsaturated flow within model to better represent timing recharge
- Uncertainty analysis to better understand limitations of model
- The model will be used to develop and implement management scenarios and impacts
- The model does not account for the age of vineyards
- There is a concern about not taking into account benefits of agricultural practices in recharge versus residential

Action Items

- Staff to draft letter from Panel to VOMWD regarding GSA formation prior to May 5th hearing
- New Subcommittee on Community-Based Outreach to form and get to work with staff support
- TAC to continue progress developing Alternatives and Scenarios, and providing input to the model update
- Next TAC May 13, 2015
- Next BAP July 16 or 23, 2015